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NEWS RELEASE

3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302
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BEWARE OF A NEW TELEPHONE SCAM Callers Are Saying They Represent the Government

ALEXANDRIA, August 29, 2005 – Michael B. Taylor, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Louisiana, warns consumers to be aware of a new telephone scam.

“People are being contacted and asked for personal information regarding their bank accounts,” said Taylor. “The callers are identifying themselves as government or USDA employees and stating the information is needed in order to transfer grant funds.”

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana—working with many lending institutions. However, USDA Rural Development employees do not ask customers for bank account information over the telephone or by internet.

“If someone is contacted by a caller representing themselves as a USDA Rural Development employee and requested to provide personal banking information over the telephone, such as bank account numbers, they should refuse to provide the information and contact the local authorities immediately,” said Taylor.

The Louisiana USDA Rural Development State Office is located at 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, and the telephone number is (318) 473-7921. There are four area offices located throughout the state to serve Louisiana residents. Further information on USDA Rural Development’s loan and grant programs can be obtained by visiting Rural Development’s web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

USDA Rural Development is an equal opportunity lender, provider, and employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20250-9140.

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